

Cathedral OF THE *Immaculate Conception*

FEBRUARY 22, 2026 | FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT



524 EAST LAWRENCE AVENUE, SPRINGFIELD, IL 62703
CATHEDRAL PARISH OFFICE: 217-522-3342
WWW.SPICATHEDRAL.ORG

FOUNDED IN 1839 | DEDICATED IN 1928 | BUILT ON FAITH, RENEWED IN HOPE IN 2009

Cathedral Weekly

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 8

THE MOST REVEREND THOMAS JOHN PAPROCKI
NINTH BISHOP OF SPRINGFIELD IN ILLINOIS

THE VERY REVEREND BRIAN C. ALFORD, V.E.
RECTOR

THE REVEREND DANIEL MCGRATH
PAROCHIAL VICAR

THE REVEREND PIUS CHIDOZIE NWIYI
PAROCHIAL VICAR

THE VERY REVEREND DOMINIC VAHLING
IN RESIDENCE

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Sunday Masses

Saturday - 4:00pm

Sunday - 7:00am, 10:00am, & 5:00pm

Weekday Masses

Monday through Friday - 7:00am & 5:15pm

Saturday - 8:00am

Reconciliation

Monday through Friday - 4:15pm-5:00pm

Saturday - 9:00am-10:00am & 2:30pm-3:30pm

Sunday - 4:00pm-4:45pm

Adoration

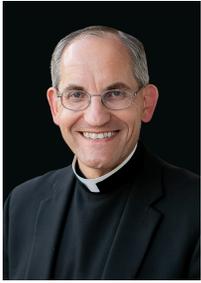
Tuesday & Thursday - 4:00pm to 5:00pm

Welcome to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception!

The mission of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield in Illinois is to build a fervent community of intentional and dedicated missionary disciples of the Risen Lord and steadfast stewards of God's creation who seek to become saints. Accordingly, the community of Catholic faithful in this Diocese is committed to the discipleship and stewardship way of life as commanded by Christ Our Savior and as revealed by Sacred Scripture and Tradition. (Synod Declaration 1a)

On behalf of our bishop, the Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki, our parishioners, deacons, and priests, we welcome you to the mother church of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois.

The seat of the diocese was moved to Springfield from Alton in 1923. In the same year, "Old St. Mary's" church of Immaculate Conception Parish was named as the pro-cathedral of the new diocese until this cathedral church was built and dedicated in 1928. Currently, our diocese comprises twenty-eight counties in central Illinois, serving over 140,000 members of the Catholic faithful.



Obedient to Death

On this First Sunday of Lent, we hear the account of the fall of our first parents, Adam and Eve. The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes this scene in the following words:

Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God's command. This is what man's first sin consisted of. All subsequent sin would be disobedience toward God and lack of trust in his goodness. (CCC 397)

Disobedience is at the heart of all sin, therefore when Christ came into the world as one of us, He brings about our reconciliation through obedience, as St. Paul recounts:

Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. (Phil 2:5-8)

Where Adam and Eve were unsuccessful in remaining obedient to God after succumbing to the temptation of the devil, we see in the Gospel for the First Sunday of Lent Jesus remaining obedient and thus resisting the temptations of Satan. This incident at the very beginning of His public ministry would define His whole life – obedience to the Father in all things, even to the point of dying on the Cross. I have therefore chosen the following invocation from the Litany of the Sacred Heart for this week:

Heart of Jesus, obedient to death, have mercy on us

When Jesus taught us how to pray in the Lord's Prayer, one of the petitions He asks us to pray is: "thy will be done." This is a prayer in which we are asking to exercise the virtue of obedience. We have to fight the constant temptation within ourselves that says: "my will be done." Again, that is basically what sin boils down to. We know what we are supposed to do, but we prefer what we want to do, thus obeying our will over the will of God. That is, of course, in those circumstance when what we want is opposed to God's will, for what we want to do can certainly be what God wants for us, but we should be obeying first because it is His will, not because it is ours and that it just so happens to also conform with His will.

Obedience can be difficult, and choosing to act against our selfish will can be a painful experience. In those moments, we often turn in on ourselves, becoming preoccupied with the anticipated discomfort. The better reaction is to turn our gaze toward Christ and learn from His example. I find the following words from the Letter to the Hebrews helpful to recall when obedience can be challenging:

Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood (Heb 12:3-4)

These words, strong though they may seem, are not meant to discourage us, but rather to encourage us to find in the Heart of Jesus the strength to resist temptation and remain obedient to the Father, just as He was, even to the point of dying on the Cross.

Father Alford is the Rector of the Cathedral and serves in the diocesan curia as the Vicar for Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations.

Mass Intentions

Monday, February 23

7am - David Steele
12:05pm - John & Edith Bakalar
5:15pm - John Geraghty

Tuesday, February 24

7am - Dick Allender
12:05pm - Deceased Members of the Chiaradonna Family
5:15pm - Intention for Cathy & Doris

Wednesday, February 25

7am - Edward Anselment
12:05pm - Marilyn Mancini
5:15pm - Ralph Walter

Thursday, February 26

7am - Marian Olivero
12:05pm - Dick Allender
5:15pm - Cesare Chiaradonna

Friday, February 27

7am - John Piccinino
12:05pm - Sarah R. McGee
5:15pm - Anita Bates

Saturday, February 28

8am - Raymond & Eulalia Ohl
4pm - Patricia McGuigan-Hubbell

Sunday, March 1

7am - For the People
10am - Margaret Vaplon Miller
5pm - Keegan McKeown



When St. Francis was a young man, he loved God and wanted to serve him. He naturally desired to help the poor, and it was well known that he was generous with his money and time toward them - and all this even before he was called to leave everything and follow Jesus. At this time in his life, God began to reveal to him bit by bit something about the way that he would eventually call Francis to follow him.

St. Bonaventure recounts the story of a dream that Francis had, a dream which offers us even today a great deal of food for thought.

After performing a great act of charity toward a poor man, Francis goes to sleep the next night and sees a vision in this dream. "God in his goodness," St. Bonaventure writes, "showed [Francis] a large and splendid palace full of military weapons emblazoned with the insignia of Christ's cross. ... when Francis asked to whom these belonged, he received an answer from heaven that all these things were for him and his knights. When he awoke in the morning, he judged the strange vision to be an indication that he would have great prosperity..." (The Life of St. Francis, Translated by Ewert Cousins)

To those of us who know the rest of the story, this judgment sounds strange, but Francis did not know at this time about God's call to poverty. He thought he would become a great knight for his city and country and lead others. What we know now is that God meant that Francis would be a knight in a more heavenly army and lead many others to serve God with the weapons of poverty, chastity, and obedience in a very radical way.

As Francis goes along after this dream, "still ignorant of God's plan, he decided to join a certain count of Apulia, hoping in his service to obtain the glory of knighthood." In Francis' mind, this would be the greatest honor - to serve God by faithfully serving a good man. Still, this was not to be. While he was on his way to serve that man, the Lord broke through to Francis and began to reveal to him more deeply his vocational call.

This time, the message from the Lord was much clearer. St. Bonaventure records the Lord say, "'Francis, who can do more for you, a lord or a servant, a rich man or a poor man?' When Francis replied that a lord and a rich man could do more, he was at once asked: 'Why, then, are you abandoning the Lord for a servant and the rich God for a poor man?'"

In these beautiful words, we begin to see how Jesus was transforming the imagination of his beloved son, Francis. Francis thought he was going to serve a rich man, but God is richer.

He thought he was going to serve a "lord," but compared to The Lord of heaven, that man was only a servant.

God becomes, for Francis, the Master of all masters, the Lord of all lords, the King of all kings, to be served above all others. The Lord then calls Francis to return to Assisi rather than go on to Apulia, and "he returned in haste to Assisi, joyous and free of care..." We see the effect of this word from the Lord. It brings him lightness, peace, and joy - some clear signs that it is from the Lord.

St. Francis learned early on in his life that Jesus, his high priest and king, would love him and honor him far more greatly than any human person on earth. He learned early on that no human and earthly honors could compare with divine and heavenly honors. May our minds and imaginations might be formed similarly. May we serve with joy and gladness the greatest Master, the one who loves us, the crucified King, risen from the dead. St. Francis, pray for us! Amen.

Fr. Daniel McGrath is a Parochial Vicar of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and serves as Chaplain of Sacred Heart-Griffin High School.

Stewardship of Treasure

February 14th & 15th

Envelopes:	\$3,213.00
Loose:	\$3,476.00
Maintenance:	\$1,110.00
Total:	\$7,799.00

Online Giving: If you would like to extend a special gift to the Cathedral, please visit our website. Our parish is grateful for your continued support.
Thank you!

Sacraments

Deaths

Robert "Bob" Bretz

Date of Death: January 28, 2026

Received into the Church

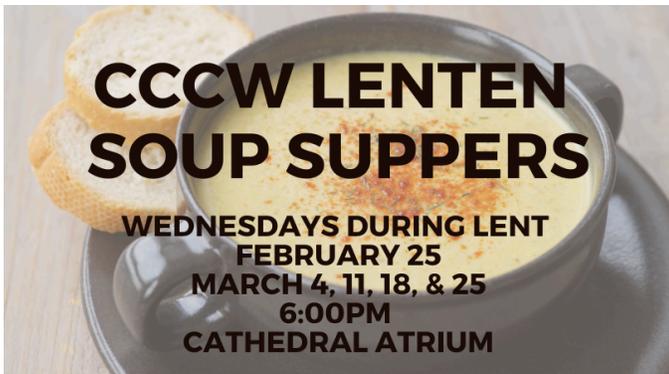
Madison Metz

February 15, 2026

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 23

<u>MONDAY</u>	<u>TUESDAY</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY</u>	<u>THURSDAY</u>	<u>FRIDAY</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>	<u>SUNDAY</u>
Rosary 4:45 PM Church	Adoration 4:00 PM Church	Men's Bible Study 6:00 AM School Library Rosary 4:45 PM Church Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Room	Women's Bible Study 10:00 AM & 1:00 PM School Library Adoration 4:00 PM Church	Rosary 4:45 PM Church Stations of the Cross 6 PM Church		

What's Going on Around the Cathedral?



CCCW Lenten Soup Suppers

Join the women of CCCW for Lenten Soup Suppers throughout this season of Lent! The first Lenten Soup Supper will be Wednesday, February 25, beginning at 6pm in the Atrium. Various homemade soups with bread & crackers will be served. All are welcome!

CATHEDRAL PARISHIONER CATHOLIC SCHOOL TUITION SCHOLARSHIP

Applications are available now and are due by March 15th. The scholarship will be paid directly to the school by April 15th.



Cathedral Parishioner Catholic School Tuition Scholarship

The Cathedral Parish believes in the value of Catholic education and is committed to assisting parishioners who choose a Catholic education for their children by providing tuition assistance. Parishioners will receive a \$500 tuition scholarship for each child enrolled in a Springfield Catholic Grade School (Grades K-8), and a \$750 tuition scholarship for each child enrolled at Sacred Heart-Griffin High School. The Scholarship is eligible to any parishioner household who is registered and active in the Cathedral parish. For more information or to apply, please visit our website (www.spicathedral.org/cathedral-parishioner-catholic-school-tuition-scholarship-form/). Applications are due by March 15th, 2026. If you have any questions, please contact the Cathedral Parish Office at 217-522-3342.

SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Lent: A Time of Preparation

CRS Rice Bowl brings Catholics across the United States together each Lent to respond to global hunger and poverty through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. During this holy season, let us recommit to sharing bread for life with our global family so that all people can reach their God-given potential. Visit crricebowl.org/week-1 to read this week's Story of Hope.

SDCCW Scholarship Opportunity

The SDCCW (Springfield in IL Diocesan Council of Catholic Women) is pleased to give \$2,000 for education beyond high school to four 2026 female high school graduates from the Springfield Diocese in IL who exemplify the SDCCW's mission. The mission of the SDCCW is to support and empower all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership and service. The SDCCW is affiliated with the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW). Applications are available in the Cathedral Atrium, and must be mailed to the SDCCW Scholarship Program by April 15, 2026.

A Journey to Joy - Bringing scripture to Life

Frank Runyeon a national acclaimed performer will perform the Gospel of Luke, explore the Sermon on the Mount, and speak about Hollywood vs. Faith for three days, Sunday, March 1 - Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at St. Aloysius Church (2000 Sangamon Ave. Springfield, Illinois) Each performance beginning at 7:00pm is an hour and will touch on one of the three topics. The three evenings will be both entertaining and eye-opening. There will be a light reception each evening after the performance..

Second Collection - Church in Central and Eastern Europe

Years of war in Ukraine have profoundly affected both Ukrainian society and the Church in Ukraine. By donating to this special collection when it is taken up in our diocese- either through a contribution at Mass or through your parish's e-giving platform- you help the Church in Ukraine and more than 25 other countries in Central and Eastern Europe to witness to Christ's mercy, even in the midst of terrible hardship. For more information about the collection and who it supports, visit www.usccb.org/ccee. Thank you for your help to restore the Church and build the future in Central and Eastern Europe.

Holy Hour for Peace

The Dominican Sisters of Springfield welcome all to join them for a virtual holy hour for peace, 4-5 p.m. Thursday, February 26. They offer this prayer at the request of the bishops of the United States who have asked for prayer before the Blessed Sacrament for the cause of peace in our communities, in our country, and for those suffering persecution anywhere in the world. Please join us in this moment of hope and healing. Access the livestream at springfieldop.org/livestream

Fr. Tolton Council 16126 Knights of Columbus

Following the example of our founder, Blessed Michael McGivney, we are a brotherhood committed to boldly living our faith and serving our families, parishes and communities. Below are some upcoming activities and events hosted by the Fr. Tolton Council based here at the Cathedral parish:

- **February 26** - Council Meeting at 7:00 PM, council chambers, 1st floor school hall
- **March 29** - 5th Sunday Rosary after 10 AM Mass

Visit our website at <http://www.kofc16126.org/> for all the details. New members are always welcome, join online at <http://kofc.org/join> and use council number 16126. Questions? Contact Grand Knight Larry Travis, LTRAVISJR@gmail.com, or Program Director Brian Huber, bhubiecomcast.net.

St Joseph the Worker Parish Mission - Church Fully Alive!

Join St Joseph the Worker Parish in Chatham, IL for on Sunday, March 1 and Monday, March 2 at 6:00 PM for their Parish Mission - Church Fully Alive! What would your life be like if you were more FULLY ALIVE! Lee Roessler is a well-known passionate genuine Christian musician whose charm persuasively invites an audience to find their hope and strength in Christ! Joe Farris an experienced and esteemed public speaker, Joe aims to deliver education, inspiration and entertainment to a variety of audiences.



Into the Desert

When we first got married, I wanted to know everything my husband was thinking, exactly when he was thinking it.

Thirteen years later, I still want to know it all. But I want to know it after he's had a snack.

I think he still wants to know what I'm thinking, too. But he wants to know it after I've had 10 minutes without hearing the word, "Mommy!"

Life has taught us, you see, that it's hard to be a good person, a nice person, a gentle person, when your body doesn't feel good or nice or gentle. When you're hungry. When you're exhausted. When you're anxious.

It's not impossible, of course. It's just ... hard.

We're entering a penitential season, a time in which we purposefully deprive ourselves in certain ways. During Lent, we intentionally enter into the desert of physical hunger and weakness. Why, in preparation for Easter and in an effort to spiritually purify ourselves, do we go to this place where it's so hard to be good? Why do we go to the desert?

Because Christ has shown us that the desert is where decisions are made.

There are many reasons why the Word became flesh to accomplish God's plan for our salvation. But I think one of the most important reasons must have been that God wanted to show us that He knows, intimately, how easily the devil exploits our physical experience of this world. We see it in today's Gospel: Jesus, hungry and weary. Jesus, taunted and tempted.

We see him. We recognize him. We are him.

And we hear his voice, even though it trembles with fatigue: "Get away, Satan!"

Today, we enter the desert. Because the desert is where decisions are made.

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman
©LPi

Around the Diocese

- **HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE January 12-21, 2017** - Join Fr. Dean Probst and Fr. Charles Delano on a trip to the Holy Land, visiting the area of the Sea of Galilee, Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem, Enjoy celebrating Masses and Prayer Services at the places of Jesus' birth, preaching, miracles and crucifixion and resurrection. Cost is \$4099/person from St. Louis airport. Contact Fr. Dean at 217-494-6326 or email rdprobst@gmail.com for brochure.
- **Save the Date: Upcoming DCCW Springfield Deanery Meeting**, February 28, 2026, 9am-12pm, Holy Trinity Catholic Hall, Stonington, IL. Stay tuned for more information and details about the event. We look forward to seeing you there!
- **Solemnity of the Annunciation: Women's Faith, Wine, and Chocolate Night** - Women are invited to an evening of fellowship centered on Christ and Our Lady, beginning with Mass at 6 p.m., followed by wine, chocolate, and discussion on womanhood modeled after the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Wednesday, March 25: 5:30 p.m. - 9 p.m. Cost: \$10 Registration Deadline: March 20 Contact: events@dio.org. Register at: dio.org/events